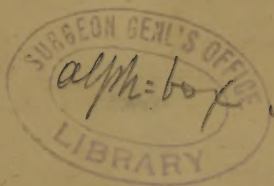


WURDEMAN (J.G.F.)

Climates of Florida
and the West Indies.



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CLIMATES OF FLORIDA AND THE WEST INDIES.

THE injurious effects of cold on many chronic diseases, is admitted by every one; but although Sir James Clark in England, and Dr. Samuel Forry in our own country, have published what was known of the climates of the two continents, there is no subject on which the medical profession is more divided than the selection of a suitable winter retreat for consumptives. Southern France, and even Italy, have of late been generally abandoned by the English, their invalids now resorting to Madeira; while so many of our own sick have returned from a winter's residence in the West Indies, only to die at home, that several of our eminent Northern physicians have even advised confinement in a closed, heated room, in preference to a removal to a southern clime.

For many years afflicted with phthisis, and compelled to pass the last seven winters in the West Indies and the southern parts of Florida, we have been necessarily placed in communication with numerous invalids similarly affected, many of whom were under our professional care; and from personal experience and the observations of others, we have had ample opportunities for comparing the effects of the different climates on the disease. We now propose to present the results to our professional brethren, premising that we have passed five winters in Cuba, one at Key West, and one at Enterprise, East Florida.

We know nothing more of the climate of Jamaica, than that Sir James Clark condemns it, stating that consumptive soldiers, sent there to recruit, sank rapidly under its debilitating heats. From all we could gather of the smaller islands, (and we have conversed with many intelligent invalids who had wintered on them,) Cuba possesses great advantages over St. Thomas, Santa Cruz and Curaçoa in climate, but in accommodations is far inferior.

That *brackish* atmosphere, if we may so term it, which hangs over all sea coasts, extending several miles inland when the ground is low and unsheltered by forests, and which is bounded seaward only by blue water, the limits of soundings, renders unfit for consumptives all the towns on the smaller islands. Havana and Matanzas are enveloped in the same pernicious air; and we know only one place in Cuba, accessible to strangers, Limonar, desirable as a winter residence, and that one, now, having but a single, small boarding house. The climate of Key West is so similar to that of the small tropical islands, that its only advantage is in being under our own government, while it

is obnoxious to the objections to all sea-ports, a mingled land and sea atmosphere.

When tubercles are fully developed, the debilitating heats of the tropic seem to hasten their softening; and when a norther bursts over the land, the sudden transition from its preceding sultry, south wind, to a temperature, which, although seldom below 50° Fah., chills more than a freezing blast from our mountains, causes great suffering in those who are much reduced by disease. We have also observed that hemorrhages from the lungs were very frequent in Havana, Matanzas and Key West, even in those, who before they came to those places had not suffered from them; and cases expectorating tuberculous matter, or with cavities, sank more rapidly in their debilitating atmospheres, than we have seen similar ones do, even during winter, in Charleston.

When the tubercular cachexy is forming, we believe that a winter spent in the *interior* of Cuba will do much to remove that condition of the system; but in those in whom the disease is already far advanced, late observations have induced us to believe that a tropical climate hastens the softening of tubercles and the formation of cavities. Still further confirmed in this opinion by its effects on our own case, we determined to explore the interior of Florida, of which, when we published our "Notes on Cuba," we had received only unfavorable accounts. Our voyage up the St. John's river was made during a north-east wind, which enabled us, in a measure to test, *en passant*, the climates of the different places at which we stopped.

At Jacksonville we still felt sensibly the damp chilliness of this sea breeze, and we continued our voyage to Palatka, visiting on the way Black Creek, on which we could not well pass an opinion, except that it appeared rather a dismal spot in the evening twilight by which we viewed it. We have been since informed by one who had been a boarder there, that fogs were not unfrequent and dense during the winter, but that the accommodations were good. At Palatka, for the first time, the air was devoid of dampness, but it still remained keen; and during the week which we spent there, we felt the cold still very sensibly. It is, however, preferable to Jacksonville and Black Creek for invalids; and the beautiful adjoining live oak grove would, if cleared from its undergrowth, form a delightful promenade. But, like the two last places, it seems almost entirely devoid of means of amusement, without which the tedium of an invalid's life becomes doubly wearisome. That *sans souci*, too, which should be the chief aim of the sick, can never be enjoyed in a village, where the rules of etiquette and dress are far more stringent than in a metropolis, and where the slightest deviation from either would soon send the unfortunate innovator to Coventry.

Pursuing our voyage up the river, we gradually passed into a spring-like climate; now gliding in our little steamboat between the forests skirting the narrow stream, startling from its banks the deer and wild turkeys, and surprising many a sleeping alligator with the rifle's deadly messenger; and then suddenly emerging on the open prairie, where the wide fields of green grass were bounded far in the distance by islands and lines of forest trees, we amused ourselves in tracing the flights of large flocks of curlews and other birds, which seemed to claim dominion over these verdant plains. Stopping for a while at Drayton island, where we obtained some delicious oranges from its fine grove, we crossed Lake George; and after a delightful and varied voyage of river and lake navigation, we entered the beautiful sheet of water on which Enterprise is situated, and were soon landed amidst its palmetto and live oak groves. As we seated ourself in the piazza of the mansion, which affords a fine view of the lake, and gazed on the summer garb of nature, listening to the song of the feathered tribes, and inhaling the soft breezes which fanned our fevered cheek, we felt that the object of our visit to Florida had been accomplished; and that we could congratulate our professional brethren on possessing a climate within our own territories, equal, if not superior, to any resorted to by invalids on either continent; nor have we been induced to change this opinion by our subsequent observations during the winter.

It had long been our belief that near the southern limits of frost would be found a temperature, which without irritating the bronchial tubes by a too keen cold, would be sufficiently bracing to give tone to the low state of the system, attendant on that cachectic condition in which tubercles are developed. We regard free exercise in the open air as indispensable in the treatment of phthisis; and he who has walked the Paris hospitals, and listened to the history of the disease from the lips of the great observer, Louis, can never conscientiously recommend to his patient the suicidal confinement to a closed, heated room, in preference to the invigorating inhalation of a balmy and open air.

The experiments of Milne Edwards on animals, and the great frequency of the disease in all large ill-ventilated towns—amid the privations of their squalid poor, and the equally deleterious luxuries of their indolent rich, deranging and weakening the whole animal economy, prove incontestibly that the tubercular cachexy, although specific in its character, is only developed in debilitated constitutions. With this knowledge of the disease, our main effort should be directed against the constitutional degeneration, while we should not overlook the local effects on the lungs, nor the lesions of other organs, so often attendant on

phthisis. The most dangerous of the latter are derangements of the alimentary canal, which preventing the due digestion and assimilation of food, rapidly exhaust the strength of the consumptive, and encourage the development of new tubercles in the lungs.

Now, the temperature of Lake Monroe is just sufficiently cool and bracing during the winter to entice the invalid to take outdoor exercise. Situated in latitude $28\frac{1}{2}$, about 100 miles south of St. Augustine and 30 miles from the sea, it possesses a dry atmosphere, with breezes as soft as those which in the tropics lull into quiet repose the irritable nerves of the invalid, while the climate is free from the oppressive heats of the latter. North winds, somewhat like the tropical *northers*, generally succeed a south wind, but the latter only is accompanied by a short shower of rain; and although the mercury falls lower than in Cuba, the cold is bracing, is devoid of dampness and does not chill. The gulf-stream too, running close to the corresponding sea-coast, deprives the north-east winds of their keenness; while the sandy, pine forests, through which they pass before they reach Enterprize, absorb all their superabundant moisture, and leave them as soft as the tropical trades; neither hair nor burnt powder, two most delicate tests of humidity, ever showing its presence, except during a shower or an occasional morning fog. The winter, also, is the *dry* season; and from the annexed table it will be seen that fogs, so prevalent in Cuba, are rare, and that rain falls very seldom. Comparing the climate of Enterprize with that of the West Indies, we would liken that of the latter to our hot summers, requiring the invalid to be clothed in thin linens to bear the heat; while a genial, spring-like temperature prevails in the former, like that of our May or a northern June. The sun in the mornings and afternoons is seldom too warm to render an exposure to it unpleasant, and the cold, on the few days when frost is formed, is not sufficient to kill such tender vegetables as peas or potatoes, which yield abundantly throughout the winter. Indeed, during the months of December, January, February and March, the invalids who wintered there with us, some of whom were far advanced in consumption, lived almost entirely out of doors during the day, amusing themselves by sailing and fishing on the lake, or by exploring expeditions through the woods, on foot and on horseback. A remarkable diminished susceptibility to "taking cold" was felt by all; and those who at home had carefully avoided the open air, often remained after night in the piazzas with impunity. We have witnessed the same exemption from bad effects of the night air in Cuba, and on the sea when in *blue water*.

The thermometer from which the following table was made by Mr. Henry Hall, an intelligent gentleman from Boston, was

placed on the north side of the house, entirely protected from the reflection of the sun, and the observations were very carefully noted.

FAHRENHEIT. (*f.* fog, *s.* a shower, *r.* continued rain.)

JAN'Y	8 A.M.	1 P.M.	8 P.M.	FEB'Y	8 A.M.	1 P.M.	8 P.M.	MAR'H	8 A.M.	1 P.M.	8 P.M.
1	65°	62°	68°	1	45°	64°	53°	1	44°	62°	47°
2	61	80	70	2	s. 53	72	64	2	53	71	53
3	66	82	67	3	68	64	56	3	66	73	71
4	63	81	71	4	42	62	54	4	r. 70	81	71
5	69	76	65	5	48	61	57	5	s. 61	61	54
6	70	81	70	6	55	70	60	6	63	76	65
7	72	75	55	7	s. 57	60	56	7	68	80	71
8	32	41	34	8	56	68	55	8	s. 75	87	74
9	39	65	53	9	57	70	67	9	71	83	73
10	58	82	64	10	s. 65	63	63	10	72	83	70
11	f. 62	70	57	11	55	52	46	11	68	81	70
12	50	70	54	12	37	52	50	12	70	85	79
13	56	76	61	13	44	58	50	13	s. 74	74	72
14	55	73	63	14	48	68	59	14	58	64	52
15	56	79	62	15	46	70	62	15	51	53	48
16	61	76	67	16	52	78	66	16	52	60	50
17	f. 62	80	63	17	59	80	67	17	51	62	54
18	f. 64	78	70	18	61	82	68	18	53	73	64
19	s. 62	78	74	19	62	79	69	19	57	76	66
20	f. 69	80	72	20	66	84	69	20	56	76	69
21	68	59	48	21	64	81	73	21	69	68	69
22	43	61	52	22	71	72	64	22	58	70	56
23	57	73	64	23	46	61	55	23	56	70	58
24	s. 62	80	60	24	58	76	70	24	54	70	56
25	66	79	63	25	69	79	70	25	s. 64	74	55
26	s. 66	78	70	26	s. 72	72	69	26	56	70	55
27	61	77	57	27	s. 70	70	62	27	45	66	54
28	64	76	70	28	45	56	53	28	54	67	54
29	r. 68	69	67					29	50	74	62
30	49	63	56					30	57	74	69
31	48	60	56					31	66	76	68

During the coldest day in winter the thermometer rose above 100° in the sun.

We would here, however, remark that the thermometer alone is not a sure guide to the *sensation* of cold; and while the mornings on which there was frost were cool enough to induce our fellow invalids to gather around the fire-side, the sun soon dissipated the cold, and few remained within doors after breakfast.

If in point of climate, Enterprize ranks first of all the accessible settlements in Florida, its value as a resort for invalids is greatly enhanced by its mineral springs. These may be judged by the following qualitative analysis of three of them, from some waters presented to J. R. Chilton, Esq. of New-York, by Major C. Taylor, the former owner of Enterprize.

"Upper Salt Spring.—One quart contains 82 grains saline matter, consisting of the following ingredients: chloride of sodium, chloride of calcium, chloride of magnesium, carbonate of soda,

carbonate of magnesia, carbonate of lime, sulphate of magnesia, sulphate of lime, oxide of iron, silica and vegetable matter. The water is impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen and carbonic acid gases."

"Lower Salt Spring.—One quart contains 148 grains of saline matter, consisting of chloride of sodium, chloride of calcium, chloride of magnesium, sulphate of lime, sulphate of magnesia, carbonate of lime, carbonate of soda, carbonate of magnesia, vegetable matter, etc., a trace of iron. The water also contains sulphuretted hydrogen and carbonic acid gases."

"Green Sulphur Spring.—One quart yielded 20 grains of saline matter, consisting of chloride of sodium, chloride of calcium, chloride of magnesium, sulphate of lime, carbonate of magnesia, iodide of sodium, silica, etc." Mr. Chilton further remarks, that "it must be evident to any one acquainted with the ingredients contained in these waters, that the springs possess medicinal properties of a high order."

The Green Sulphur Spring is circular, about 60 feet in diameter and 100 feet deep, pouring out a rapid and large stream, depositing a white sediment. The Lower Salt Spring has a uniform temperature of 76° Fah., and forms a very pleasant bath during the whole of winter. Besides these, there are several other sulphur, and some strong chalybeate springs; and we leave it to our professional brethren to decide on the value of Enterprise, as a winter retreat for invalids, possessing as it does, a genial clime and these waters. During the past winter we have had opportunities of testing their efficacy in cases of advanced phthisis, in which the strength was much reduced by derangement of the digestive organs; and found that the Green Sulphur Spring, acted at first rapidly, but not copiously, on the kidneys, and while it increased the appetite, and relieved the patient of all the tormenting symptoms of dyspepsia, it did not affect the chest, as many sulphur waters do in consumptives. The Lower Salt Spring is gently aperient; and the upper, in pure cases of dyspepsia, has acted very beneficially. Besides these there is a spring of pure, cool water, not often found in East Florida.

We would not, however, claim an exclusive preference for Enterprise. At Melonville, across the lake, Dr. Spears is about to erect a comfortable house for boarders in the pine lands, and others will probably be shortly built in the vicinity. There are also ample accommodations at Jacksonville, Black Creek and Palatka; and those of St. Augustine excel all the rest in the variety which their tables afford. Although the climate of this latter place has fallen into great disrepute with physicians, a visit to it will well repay, it being the oldest town in the United States, and retaining much of its original Spanish air; the spring, when the north-east winds cease to prevail, would be the best time to pass through it.

It may not be here inappropriate to devote a few lines of advice to invalids, especially those of the more northern States, on the time to come South. The first cold spells of winter should be avoided, by reaching Charleston in the beginning of October, which month spend in Aiken, a village on the Hamburg railroad, possessing a delightful Fall and Spring climate, early in November take the daily steamer for Savannah, passage inland, price \$5—thence the semi-weekly steamer for Jacksonville, passage inland, price \$9. Thence the weekly steamer for Enterprise, passage inland, price \$6. Boarding in Florida varies from 5 to 6 dollars a week, and at Enterprise the table is abundantly furnished with venison and other game.

We have in the preceding pages described only those portions of Florida which we have visited; but we think we can safely predict, that the shores of the St. John's will become the resort of all our invalids who require a warm winter climate. The means of communication by steamer, over the smooth waters of the inland navigation, is attended with so little fatigue, that even the bed-ridden could bear the journey from Charleston to Enterprise. It boasts, also, a great advantage over Italy, in having no mountain ranges covered during winter with snows; the cold blasts from the Appenines and the Jura mountains, rendering a large portion of Italy and Southern France unfit for invalids unable to bear a sudden and great decrease of temperature. We would here also warn consumptives, especially, against a too early departure from their winter quarters. A few summer-like days in February or March will often, in those anxious to return to their homes, induce the belief that the warm weather has fairly set in; they commence their homeward journey, and in Savannah or Charleston meet with a spell of cold weather in the beginning of April, causing a fresh attack of bronchitis, and counteracting all the benefit derived by their exclusion from the cold of winter. A still greater fault is committed by the mass of consumptives in returning at once, and often when only partially relieved, to the same climate and occupation which brought on the attack. The doctor who would send a fever and ague patient, just convalescent, back to his marshy home, would be looked upon as insane, and we think the charge just as applicable to nearly every invalid we have met on our winter excursions South. Indeed, from the permanent check of the disease in many who have removed entirely from their former residence, we are inclined to attribute to a neglect of this precaution, a large proportion of the fatal cases.

From the following table of the rates of the thermometer at Jacksonville, kindly furnished to the writer by Dr. A. S. Baldwin of that place, it will be seen that it boasts of a mild winter climate; although its atmosphere, as I have been informed by

invalids who passed the season there, was damp and the east winds chilling. We have, however, known several who have derived much benefit from a winter's residence there, and, compared to St. Augustine, it is, certainly, to be preferred.

JAN.	7½ A.M.	2 P.M.	9 P.M.	FEB.	7½ A.M.	2 P.M.	9 P.M.	MAR.	7½ A.M.	2 P.M.	9 P.M.
1	62	74	64	1	42	64	46	1	42	60	51
2	65	73	69	2	47	69	66	2	46	61	52
3	64	76	70	3	66	64	48	3	54	70	68
4	65	75	69	4	39	52	46	4	64	71	63
5	63	68	60	5	37	55	52	5	54	54	54
6	62	73	66	6	49	67	62	6	56	66	58
7	68	67	39	7	57	65	56	7	59	68	63
8	25	38	28	8	54	66	57	8	65	77	70
9	30	54	52	9	59	68	65	9	70	78	73
10	52	66	60	10	64	66	64	10	70	80	74
11	60	62	41	11	47	50	40	11	70	81	74
12	36	55	48	12	34	50	44	12	71	79	76
13	48	64	52	13	44	60	50	13	69	66	59
14	48	64	54	14	47	65	54	14	51	61	51
15	52	68	62	15	52	68	54	15	48	60	50
16	58	72	67	16	50	69	62	16	46	58	48
17	62	66	62	17	58	73	66	17	48	51	48
18	62	74	66	18	62	75	68	18	50	68	62
19	66	76	70	19	63	77	64	19	57	72	63
20	68	74	66	20	62	76	66	20	60	73	67
21	60	56	44	21	66	78	70	21	62	68	58
22	32	48	45	22	69	66	56	22	57	72	62
23	46	62	62	23	46	56	46	23	62	75	60
24	62	72	63	24	50	63	60	24	50	60	50
25	61	67	60	25	58	73	67	25	48	68	63
26	59	65	62	26	66	71	66	26	65	62	48
27	62	68	58	27	68	71	54	27	42	61	54
28	60	64	64	28	46	54	44	28	50	65	52
29	64	70	61					29	53	71	58
30	48	59	48					30	62	74	68
31	39	58	46					31	66	79	69

THE Subscriber, who will reside during winter at Enterprise, will take those, who may desire it, under his professional care. For terms, etc., address him, by letter to Charleston, until the 1st November; after that time, to Enterprise, East-Florida.

J. G. F. WURDEMAN, M.D.

